

Application Number 10/594,777
AMENDMENT of January 4, 2012
In reply to Office Action of October 4, 2011

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus for laying elongate articles from a vessel at sea, the apparatus comprising a tensioner for controlling paying out of said articles along an axis of said tensioner, a structure tiltable between upright and fully horizontal states, wherein the apparatus is operable in a first mode wherein the tensioner is carried by said structure with the tensioner axis at an elevated angle, aligned with a departure angle of ~~[[the]]~~ rigid elongate product being laid, and in a second mode wherein the tensioner is arranged with the tensioner axis substantially horizontal, the apparatus in the second mode receiving flexible elongate product from the tensioner along said axis and diverting the flexible elongate product via a support structure to a more vertical angle for departure from the vessel.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tiltable structure in the first mode carries a radius controller and a straightener for conditioning rigid pipe at a position upstream of the tensioner.

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3. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein the radius controller and/or the straightener are provided at least partially in the form of modules which are removable when the apparatus is operated in the second mode.
4. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 3 wherein said support structure comprises an overboarding sheave to receive the flexible elongate product from the tensioner along said axis and to divert ~~[[it]]~~ the flexible elongate product to a more vertical angle for departure from the vessel.
5. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 4 wherein the overboarding sheave is provided at least partially in the form of a module which are removable when the apparatus is in the first mode.
6. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tiltable structure is operable in the first mode to orient the tensioner vertically and at a range of angles below vertical.
7. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein, when in said second mode, the tensioner is detachable from and supported independently of the tiltable

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structure, the tiltable structure being returned to an upright orientation for supporting loads independently of the tensioner.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 7 wherein the tiltable structure is operable in the second mode at a range of angles either side of vertical, to support in-line accessories as the flexible elongate product is diverted to a more vertical angle for departure from the vessel.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tensioner in the second mode is located at a position displaced horizontally from a location from which ~~[[it]]~~ the tensioner will be elevated by said tiltable structure in the first mode.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tiltable structure comprises a pair of legs pivoted to ~~[[the]]~~ a deck of the vessel at ~~[[their]]~~ the lower ends ~~of the legs~~ and joined by a crossbeam at ~~[[their]]~~ the upper ends ~~of the legs~~, the tensioner in the first mode being carried between the legs below the crossbeam, with a straightener and radius controller mounted above the crossbeam, and said straightener being detachable when adapting the apparatus into the second mode.

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11. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein the tiltable structure is movable to provide said horizontal displacement of the tensioner.
12. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein the tiltable structure is connected to the vessel by one or more arms pivotally connected at one end to the tiltable structure and at another end to the vessel.
13. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein a hydraulic control system of the tensioner is a dual hydraulic system.
14. (Canceled)
15. (Currently Amended) A method of configuring apparatus for laying elongate articles from a vessel at sea, the apparatus comprising a tensioner for controlling paying out of said articles along an axis of said tensioner, a structure tiltable between upright and fully horizontal states, wherein the apparatus is configurable in a first mode wherein the tensioner is carried by said structure with the tensioner axis at an elevated angle aligned with a departure angle of the rigid elongate product being laid, and in a second mode wherein the tensioner is arranged with the tensioner axis substantially horizontal, the apparatus in the second mode receiving flexible elongate product from the tensioner along said axis and diverting the flexible elongate product to

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a more vertical angle for departure from the vessel, the method including detaching certain operating equipment from the structure, moving the structure between ~~[[the]]~~ an upright position and ~~[[the]]~~ a horizontal position and locating certain operating equipment for operation with the structure in the particular mode of operation.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the operating equipment is provided as modules which is removable and relocated with respect to the structure.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 15 wherein in the first mode a radius ~~controller and/or~~ controller, straightener, or both are provided at least partially in the form of modules which are removable when the structure is in the horizontal state.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 17 wherein the tensioner in the second mode is located at a position displaced horizontally from a location from which ~~[[it]]~~ the tensioner will be elevated by said tiltable structure in the first mode.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said operating equipment includes an overboarding sheave to receive the flexible elongate product from the tensioner along said axis and to divert ~~[[it]]~~ the flexible elongate product to a more vertical angle

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for departure from the vessel, wherein the overboarding sheave is detached from said tiltable structure in said first mode.

20. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method as claimed in claim 19 wherein said operating equipment includes the tensioner itself, which is detached from and supported independently of said tiltable structure in said second mode.

21. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of laying rigid pipeline from a vessel, the method comprising paying out the pipeline using [[an]] the apparatus as claimed in claim 1, operated in its first mode, the tensioner gripping and paying out the rigid pipeline while supported on said tiltable structure at an angle aligned with the angle of departure of the pipeline from the vessel.

22. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of laying flexible pipeline from a vessel, the method comprising paying out the pipeline using [[an]] the apparatus as claimed in claim 1, operated in its second mode, the tensioner gripping and paying out the flexible pipeline along said substantially horizontal axis, the pipeline being diverted by said apparatus from said horizontal axis to the angle of departure of the pipeline from the vessel.